



Town of Harpswell
Planning Office
P.O. Box 39
Harpswell, ME 04079

MEMORANDUM

Date: March 24, 2010

To: Board of Selectmen

From: Carolyn Tukey, Town Planner

Re: Planning Updates

The following are descriptions and summaries of projects continuing or proposed:

Mitchell Field Implementation Committee (MFIC)

The committee has been working on the zoning/performance standards project with Mark Eyerman of Planning Decisions for the past several months. The committee has been doing site visits to better ascertain business types and their associated performance standards. The next public forum is planned for April 28th.

In association with Mitchell Field, I would like to have a discussion about the possibility of using Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts. This tool might be useful for both Mitchell Field and the proposed village areas. Below is a summary of TIF's.

TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF)

Tax increment financing provides municipalities with a local tool to finance the cost of private development. Maine municipalities may redirect some or all of the new property taxes from an investment project within a designated district to assist in that project's financing. Municipalities have three disbursement options for the tax increment:

- Give directly to the investing business to pay project costs.
- Use to retire bonds issued as part of the project.
- Retain for allowable economic development.
- TIF districts may be designated for up to 30 years. Bonds may be issued for up to 20 years. Financing terms are determined by the municipality. Community designation of a TIF district requires proper public notice, a public hearing, and a majority vote of the municipal legislative body

For the current Maine DECD manual about TIF's, please go to:

http://www.mainebiz.org/business_assistance/doc/TIFmanual2010_03082010.doc

Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee (CPIC)

The CPIC has narrowed the village area choices to Cundy's Harbor, West Harpswell, South Harpswell, and Mitchell Field. They have also decided to list Bailey Island and Orr's Island as

Settled Villages and Town Hall/Mountain Road as the Town District in keeping with what is stated in the Comprehensive Plan. They have also decided to allow mixed use in the village areas, but will discuss adding performance standards to some of the uses. In addition, they are planning a cable station broadcast for the week of May 10th as well as the first public workshop for comments and further recommendations on June 2nd. Attached is a current schedule for the year.

***The contract with Beth Della Valle expired on March 30, 2010. Attached is a proposed extension of the contract. Please vote as to whether you would like to extend this contract for another year.**

Affordable Housing Committee (AHC)

Now that the ordinance amendments have been adopted the committee will begin working on the affordable housing covenant.

Conservation Commission (HCC)

The HCC is working on a forum for Otter Creek area residents to discuss and brainstorm about protection methods and existing flora and fauna in the area. They have been working on the Save Our Bay program and have had many citizens “take the pledge” in the last month. Now that Town Meeting approved the Cliff Trail area grant idea, the HCC will be working toward grant funding and the review of the conservation easement area.

Ordinance Amendments

Below is a list of possible ordinance amendments to work on this year. Since there is quite a few, I am asking for your recommendation as to which ones I should work on for 2010.

1. Sally Daggett, Town Attorney recommends an amendment to the Shoreland Zoning and Basic Land Use Ordinances to make the required setback provision more obvious.
2. Peddler “cart” permits - Several people have come to me to request the use of push-type peddler carts to be used in various locations throughout town. At this point, the only way for this to be approved is to send them to the Planning Board under Site Plan Review. I would like to request the BOS consider a permit approval process similar to Freeport for peddler “carts” permits.
3. Blasting – Based on comments received too late to incorporate at this town meeting:
 - o further separate the review by CEO and PB;
 - o widen the notification for abutters to 1000ft
4. Demolition – This is a recommendation by the CEO. He recommends that a permit be required for demolition that might require hazard free disposal.
5. Windmills - This is a recommendation by the CEO, since there are no requirements for construction of windmills. He recommends setbacks and height limits at least.
6. Outdoor wood boilers - This is a recommendation by the CEO. He recommends banning them as many other towns have been doing.
7. Access to direct sunlight - This is a recommendation by the CEO. He recommends some review of this issue possibly to allow removal of trees, or installation of solar panels, and/or orientation of buildings.
8. Traditional Access Ways for fishermen, Pedestrian and Bike Trails/Access Points – This is a recommendation in the Comprehensive Plan. The Conservation Commission and several members of the general public have identified this as a goal for this year. They would like to see a subdivision ordinance amendment that would allow creation of and/or maintaining access to current historic trails and accessways such as traditional fishermen paths to clam flats and allowance for creation of new trails.
9. Definitions –

- Open Space - This is a recommendation from the Conservation Commission through the Open Space Plan. The ordinances do not have a definition of “open space.”
 - Lot line – This is my recommendation as there is no existing definition and the term is used in the ordinances.
 - Mean High water - This is my recommendation as there is no existing definition and the term is used in the ordinances.
 - Mineral exploration – This use by the definition in the Basic Land Use Ordinance and Definitions Addendum does not allow soil analysis for subsurface waste disposal in the Shoreland Zones.
 - Structure – A member of the public finds our definition too vague.
10. Open Space – The Comprehensive Plan identifies connections and preservation of open spaces as a priority. I recommend a review of the Subdivision Ordinance to identify ways to improve this goal.
 11. ADA accessibility - This is a recommendation by the CEO. He recommends an ordinance amendment that would allow temporary ramps for handicapped accessibility.
 12. Table of Contents for all ordinances – This is my recommendation as it would make it easier to find specific items in the ordinances.
 13. Road Ordinance – This ordinance “includes” driveways, but gives no regulations for driveways. I am recommending removing the word “driveway” from the Road Ordinance as it has confused several people in the past year.
 14. Subdivision Ordinance – The Comprehensive Plan recommends that phased subdivisions meet the requirements of major subdivisions. From my review, it does not appear that this has been discussed as an amendment yet.

New Meadows River Watershed Project (NMRWP)

I am currently working with Diane Gould, Matt Craig, and Heather True on the 319 grant for stormwater that was denied last year. I am recommending that the town re-apply for these funds to assist in fixing several stormwater runoff sites. These sites are: Watson’s General Store, Wallace Shore Road, Hidden Pond Road, Sebascodogan Shore Road, and Indian Rest Road. Since Indian Rest Road is the only town owned road, it is our intent to first contact the individual owners so that we can meet with them and discuss this project before we apply for the grant funding. The grant requires a match, so we need to discuss this with the landowners.

Question: Would the town consider assisting in the match effort since this may ultimately improve the pollution/fishing situation in the New Meadows? We would not apply for the grant until all of these questions have been answered, which would probably next year.

Midcoast Council of Governments (MCOG)

MCOG has recently hired Jeffrey Kobrock as the new Executive Director. He began work the last week in March. This should allow creation of additional programs to benefit the member towns since the current staff person is stretched too thin between administration and program work.

The Alliance, which is the general membership, normally meets the second Wednesday of each month at 8:30am in the Topsham Town Hall. The Executive Board normally meets the third Thursday at 8:30am in the Topsham Town Hall.